DC #20

DIRECT CURRENTS

BOOKS SHIPPING IN SEPTEMBER

IN THIS ISSUE:

THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES: THE GREAT DARKNESS SAGA
trade paperback

THE NEW LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES
ongoing monthly series

PLUS...

An interview with Keith Giffen

Cover Of The Month
THE SHADOW STRIKES #2

THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES...
THE OLD AND THE NEW

The LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES is dead. Long live the LEGION.

This month sees the publication of two LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES projects, one re-establishing them as the greatest fighting force of the 30th Century, the other featuring the best of the old LEGION.

First out is **THE *NEW* LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES**, picking up five years after the events depicted in THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #63. It is a time when the Earth has been taken over by the Dominators after the collapse of the intergalactic government—an age in which the Legion has disbanded and its members returned to their home worlds as the universe around them slides closer and closer to anarchy.

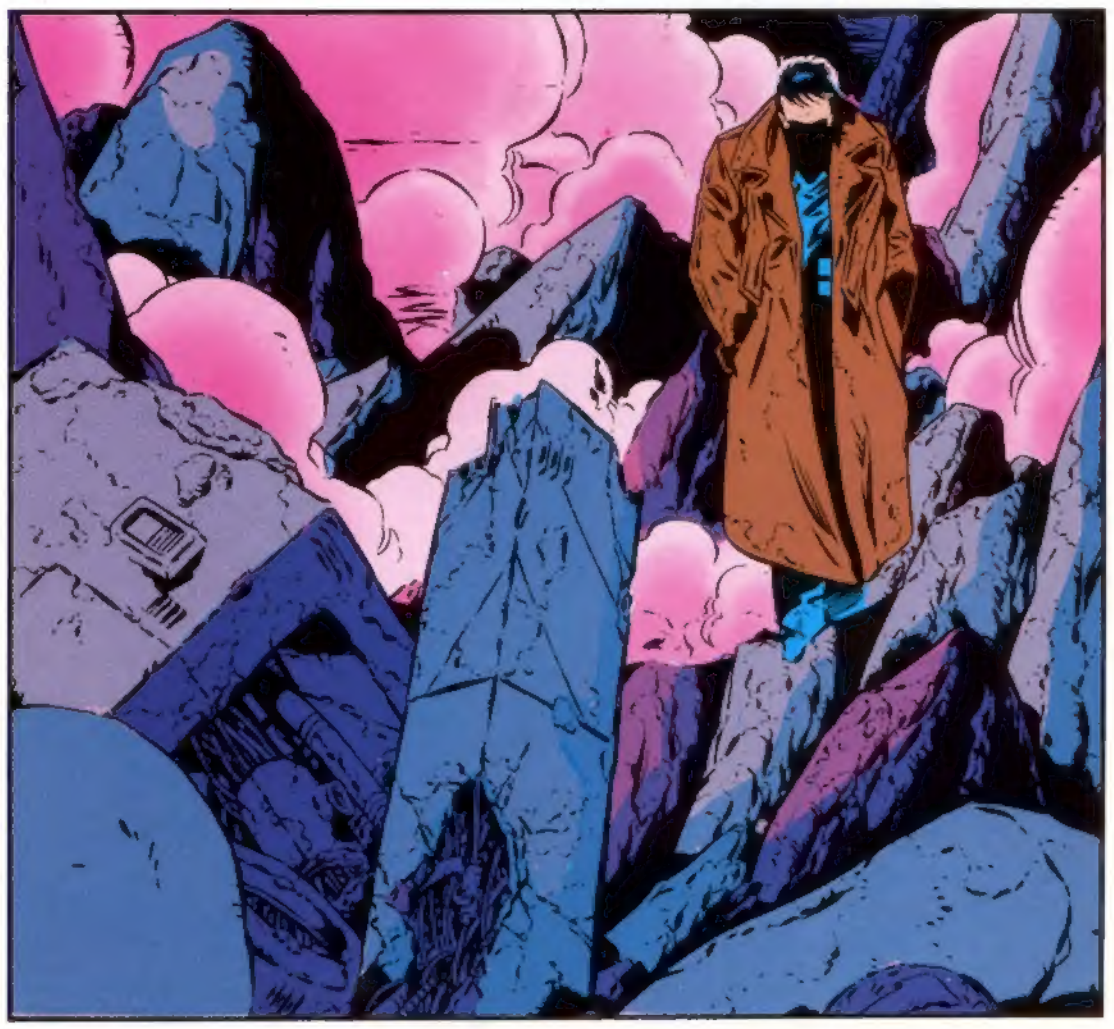
One former Legionnaire refuses to allow the destruction of everything he and his teammates fought to preserve. Now he's determined to rebuild the once-great team, different perhaps in composition, but linked to the old in its goal of fighting for justice and freedom across the universe.

THE NEW LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES, a monthly ongoing series in the Deluxe Format, is plotted and pencilled by Keith Giffen, with scripts by Tom and Mary Bierbaum, and inked by Al Gordon.

Celebrating the *old* Legion is **THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES: THE GREAT DARKNESS SAGA** trade paperback edition. Collected for the first time in a single 192-page volume is the story of the LEGION'S battle with the powerful master of Apokolips, Darkseid. Their victory will make the universe safe from a final future Apokolips. Defeat will mark the end of everything in the cosmos.

THE GREAT DARKNESS SAGA features the entire story from LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #290–#294 and, LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES ANNUAL #2 by writer Paul Levitz and artists Keith Giffen, Pat Broderick, and Larry Mahlstedt and includes seven pages redrawn especially for this collection by Giffen and Mahlstedt. Also featured is a gatefold reproduction of Giffen's long sold-out LEGION retail poster.

THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES. The best of the old . . . and the greatness that is yet to come.



FROM • THE EDITOR

To the folks at DC and others:

(I'm sending this letter to Direct Currents because it seems that the "In My Opinion" column doesn't seem to be around anymore and I do want to get some feedback on what I feel is an important issue in comics.)

I'm a Black 20-year-old, and, like most comic book fans, I'm often in the position of having to argue the merits of comics to friends and relatives. Usually I get off to a good start, and then I'm cut short when confronted with the portrayal (and lack) of Blacks and other minorities. I'm one of the first people to stress the quality of a character over color, yet I take the lack of ethnic heroes extremely personally.

Let's look at reality as defined by comics. Minority heroes are few and far between. Heroes like Superman have qualities that are universal, which explains their appeal to a broad cross-section of people; however, as a child growing up, I remember paying special attention to minority heroes. Why? Because as much as I admired all of the many superheroes, I always wondered what would happen if *I* were one. Would I be able to be as much of a hero as everyone else, or would I be some second-string afterthought?

Maybe some of you aren't aware of this, but for a kid who's a minority, you're telling him or her how they're seen by others and what must be done to be considered on a par with other heroes. It's almost horrifying to read about Tom Kalmaku, Green Lantern's Eskimo friend, happily reminiscing to his children about the days he got called "Pieface" by a "hero." What a great thing for a kid to look forward to. Beyond that, despite the recent changes in his character, the Latin New Guardian is still known as Extraño, meaning "strange"; I can't imagine too many Latinos, straight or gay, aspiring to be known as "strange".

There is a need to have characters that readers can identify with. Unfortunately, this has tended to mean "mainstreaming" minority characters. If not for their skin, they may very well have been white. A basic reality for all minorities is that there are differences between us, but there is little, if any, acknowledgment of these differences.

Most minorities can tell you of a few encounters with racism, especially in situations where there were few other minorities. Cyborg has been a member of the Titans for years now, yet his relations with Blacks have been minimal. When Amazing Man, Tempest, or Cyborg run into other Blacks, it is never questioned whether these heroes are selling out by not having any ties with the Black community. Green Arrow has done more in the Black community than all the black heroes combined, with the exception of Black Lightning.

At the risk of sounding contradictory, I'll say that DC is also responsible for providing some of the stronger images that exist of minorities in comics today. Doctor Light does anything but conform to the model minority "China doll" stereotype of the Asian woman. Amanda Waller of the Suicide Squad shines despite her faults due to the strong characterization by Ostrander. DC has reason to be especially proud of taking the embarrassing caricature of a human being, "Chop Chop", and transforming him into Weng Chan, someone we can relate to as a human being. Neither Waller nor Tempest speaks in "jive," and we have yet to fear Chan or Light spouting pseudo-mystical "Confucius say" phrases.

Despite its cancellation, Infinity Inc. was one of the most original as far as breaking stereotypes was concerned. Infinity Inc. was the only comic in memory where there was a Black male and female on a team who worked as teammates, not as lovers. How many people were surprised to see Vixen and Bronze Tiger get together so quickly after she joined the Suicide Squad?

Still, I pick up comics and see Japanese characterized as machines (RAM, of the New Guardians), Chicanos as loudmouthed breakdancers (Vibe from the JLA), and Blacks as either pseudo-whites, or as ultra-Black twits (Green Lantern John Stewart in the not-distant-enough GL Special and just about every other Black criminal).

Understand that I don't mean to single out DC for any reason other than that I'm most familiar with it. Beyond that, I know that comics alone are not responsible for the stereotypes that abound in the media and our minds, but comics can either affirm or refute these stereotypes. It was with that in mind that I wrote this letter.

Please take the time to think about what I've said. The point of this letter is not to accuse, but to get you to think about some of my questions and, I hope, to give us, your readers, some feedback.

Sincerely,
Cornelius D. Harris
1443 Washtenaw
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Cornelius:

Thanks for writing in to DIRECT CURRENTS. I was so impressed by your letter—and the importance of your concern—that I made an appointment to speak to DC Comics' President and Editor-in-Chief, Jenette Kahn. Here is what Jenette has to say:

"Cornelius, we really appreciate your thoughtful letter—your concerned analysis and balanced comments. I've been personally concerned with this issue since I arrived at DC Comics, and since I became Editor-in-Chief several months ago, I have been exhorting the editors to try to work with their artists and writers to create more appropriate ethnic mixes of characters in their comics. As a result, I'm proud to say, there will be some black characters appearing soon in the Superman and Batman titles." (These are the titles that reach our widest audience. And don't forget the Jose Delgado character that appeared fairly recently in the Superman titles.)

"I'm very glad to be publishing EL DIABLO, in which the main character speaks often in Spanish—not just mainstream English."

Jenette continues, "We *are* guilty in the past of creating condescending ethnic characters—Tom Kalmaku and Extraño, as you mentioned. I hope we will be creating more positive and realistic ethnic characters in the future. And Cornelius, since your letter is so well reasoned, I plan to photocopy it and give it to all DC editors at our weekly meeting and ask that they be responsive to it."

Thanks again for writing. The portrayal of ethnic characters in comics is indeed an important issue—for all of us.

Dear Peggy:

This is quite possibly the most irrelevant request you will ever receive. What I would like to know is, in what states are the major DC fictional cities located? For example, is Metropolis in New York or New Jersey? Is Gotham City in Illinois or Ohio? What about Star, Central, Coast, and Midway Cities? I doubt the fate of the world rests with your answers, but I'd like to know, at least.

Sincerely,
Thom Doud
(no address given)

Dear Thom:

No, this is not *the* most irrelevant request I've ever received, but it's close. (And what do you mean, the fate of the world doesn't rest with my answers? I thought *my* answers were way up there in fate-of-the-world scales . . .)

The answer is really simple—these are *fictional* cities. Each artist and writer undoubtedly has some *real* city in mind—or a combination of real cities—when creating or rendering a city.

See ya, Peggy

Paul Kupperberg, Writer
Peggy May, Editor

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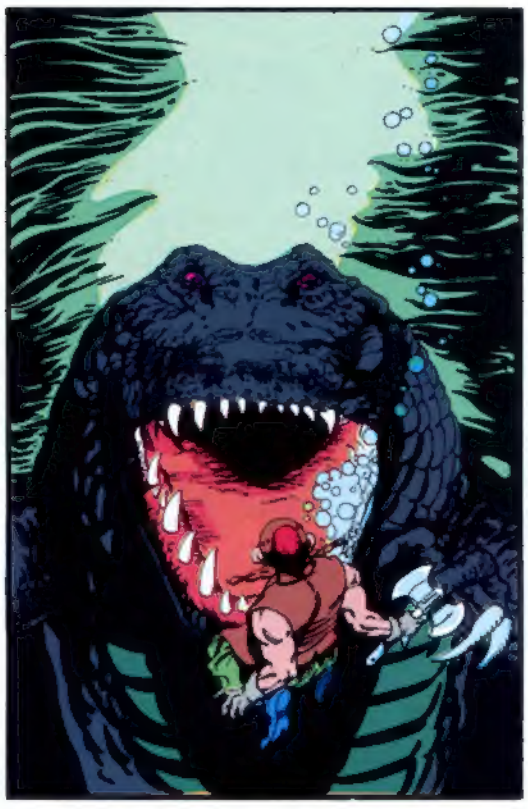
PRINTED IN CANADA

BOOKS SHIPPING IN SEPTEMBER

☐ **ACTION COMICS #646**
An ancient evil has lain undetected and undisturbed for millennia in the frozen wastes of Antarctica . . . could Superman's Eradicator be the catalyst that brings this Leviathan back to life to face Superman? Plotted and pencilled by Keith Giffen, script by Roger Stern, and inked by Dennis Janke. Cover by George Pérez. $.75

☐ **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ #11**
How deep is deep? Timoth and Onyx will find out . . . if they dare to go "Beneath Waterdeep." Written by Jeff Grubb, with art and cover by Jan Duursema. *(New Format)* $1.50



ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™

☐ **ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #460**
The Kryptonian Eradicator has created a kind of "Fortress" in the solitude of Antarctica's wastelands, but for Superman it may instead become a chamber of horrors. Written and pencilled by Dan Jurgens and inked by Art Thibert. Cover by Jurgens and Brett Breeding. $.75

☐ **ANIMAL MAN #17**
Animal Man takes part in a raid to free laboratory animals . . . and then has to face the moral consequences of his actions. Written by Grant Morrison, with art by Chas Truog and Doug Hazlewood. Cover by Brian Bolland. *(New Format)* $1.50.

☐ **BATMAN #441**
Part 3 of the 5-part "A Lonely Place of Dying": Continued from THE NEW TITANS #60, Batman and Two-Face play a deadly guessing game that has as its prize the lives of innocent people. Continued in NEW TITANS # 61. Written by Marv Wolfman, with art by Jim Aparo and Mike DeCarlo. Cover by George Pérez. $1.00

☐ **BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM Poster**
The inmates are on the loose, and DC has a fully painted multi-media poster to commemorate the chaos. Dave McKean, artist of the BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM graphic novel provides the art for this 22″×28″ poster, featuring all-new art of Batman and The Joker that is not included in the graphic novel. $7.00

☐ **BLACKHAWK #8**
Project: Assimilation comes to fruition as the comatose Blackhawks are subjected to the most sinister form of Nazi brainwashing the world has ever seen. Written by Martin Pasko, with art by Grant Miehm and Rick Burchett. Cover by Burchett. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **CAPTAIN ATOM #34**
Revealed at last . . . the secret of the UFO that made Captain Atom the super-hero he is today. Written by Cary Bates and Greg Weisman, with art by Rafael Kayanan and Romeo Tanghal. $1.00

☐ **CHECKMATE #22**
Part 2 of the 5-part "Knight Wars": the mysterious Bishop resurfaces . . . but how does he tie in with CHECKMATE's investigation into gangland involvement with California's water supply? Written by Paul Kupperberg, with art by Steve Erwin and Al Vey. Cover pencilled by Steve Erwin. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **DETECTIVE COMICS #607**
Part 4 of the 4-part "Mudpack": Published twice monthly for the duration of the series. Batman is held captive by the four Clayfaces . . . can his one-time comrade from The Outsiders, Looker, save him? Also includes a special bound-in mini-poster of Batman painted by Norm Breyfogle. Written by Alan Grant, with art by Norm Breyfogle and Steve Mitchell. Cover by Breyfogle. $1.00

DETECTIVE COMICS #607

☐ **DETECTIVE COMICS #608**
Someone is doing Batman's job for him. Can The Darknight Detective stop the murderous vigilante Anarky? Written by Alan Grant, with art by Norm Breyfogle and Steve Mitchell. Cover by Breyfogle. $1.00

☐ **DOC SAVAGE #14**
Part 4 of the 4-part "Sunlight Rising": Up in space, John Sunlight proceeds with his daring attempt to black out the sun . . . and it's up to Doc Savage alone to go after him and bring him back—dead or alive. Written by Mike W. Barr, with art by Rod Whigham and Steve Montano. Cover by Andy Kubert. *(Deluxe Format)* $2.00

DOC SAVAGE #14

☐ **DR. FATE #11**
He's back. Darkseid's struck a bargain with the forces of Chaos and Order that's going to make life miserable for Dr. Fate . . . and the rest of the world. Written by J.M. DeMatteis, with art and cover by Shawn McManus. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **THE DOOM PATROL #28**
Imagine being trapped in a surreal nightmare. Imagine having no way back to Paris . . . because it doesn't exist. Written by Grant Morrison, with art by Richard Case and John Nyberg. Cover by Simon Bisley. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **DRAGONLANCE™ #13**
The leaders of the conflicting white- and black-robed wizards resign their positions to seek the mystery of the vanishing and reappearing Tower of High Sorcery. Written by Dan Mishkin, with art by Michael Collins, Ron Randall, and Randy Elliott. Cover by Collins and Randall. *(New Format)* $1.50

BOOKS SHIPPING IN SEPTEMBER

☐ **EL DIABLO #4**
Part 1 of the 4-part "The Storm": A series of brutal child murders threatens to rip Dos Rios apart with the resulting racial tensions. Can El Diablo save his city? Written by Gerard Jones, with art and cover by Mike Parobeck and John Nyberg. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **FIRESTORM #91**
Part 2 of the 4-part "Elemental War": Firestorm, Naiad, and Red Tornado . . . the war of the elementals escalates as the differences between these beings of fire, water, and air become all too clear. Written by John Ostrander, with art and cover by Tom Mandrake. $1.00

☐ **FLASH #32**
The Pied Piper plays Welcome Wagon as he helps Wally and Mason settle into their new Keystone City digs . . . and the mastermind behind the recent attempts on Flash's life is revealed. Written by William Messner-Loebs, with art and cover by Greg LaRocque and Larry Mahlstedt. $1.00

☐ **FORGOTTEN REALMS™ #3**
Agrivar and his friends are in danger from the Mystic Hand of Vaprak . . . but that's what they get for asking advice of the *wrong* sage. Published twice a month. Written by Jeff Grubb, with art and cover by R.A. Morales and Dave Simons. *(New Format)* $1.50

FORGOTTEN REALMS™ #3

☐ **FORGOTTEN REALMS™ #4**
The power of the Mystic Hand of Vaprak is loosed on Omen the wizard by Gornak the ogre mage. Agrivar the Paladin returns from certain death to redeem himself. Published twice a month. Written by Jeff Grubb, with art and cover by R.A. Morales and Dave Simons. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **GAMMARAUDERS™ #9**
Allisdau just wants Jok to notice her, so she gets him named to a seat in Congress. *Afraid* he'll notice *them*, the Cryptic Alliance tries to remove him from office . . . by killing him. Written by Peter Gillis, with art and cover by Martin King and Alan Kupperberg.*(New Format)* $2.00

☐ **GREEN ARROW #25**
Green Arrow sees more of the sights of England than he bargained for as he travels into Sherwood Forest to help a woman who might be mad . . . or she might be a witch. Only John Constantine seems to know for sure. Written by Mike Grell, with art by Trevor VonEeden, J.J. Birch, and Michael Bair. Cover by Birch. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.25

GREEN ARROW #25

☐ **HAWK & DOVE #6**
Barter makes Hawk & Dove an offer they can't refuse . . . and in the process we learn more about their secret origin. Written by Barbara and Karl Kesel, with art by Greg Guler and Scott Hanna. Cover by Guler and Karl Kesel. $1.00

☐ **HELLBLAZER #24**
When Constantine gains possession of a house full of valuable arcana, luck smiles on him . . . but no one said it was *good* luck. Written by Jamie Delano, with art by Ron Tiner. Painted cover by Kent Williams. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format)* $1.50

☐ **THE HUNTRESS #8**
Who is the Huntress's partner? Learn how he gained his prowess in the martial arts and weaponry and what led him to become a family bodyguard . . . and what Helena means to him. Written by Joey Cavalieri, with art by Joe Staton and Bob Smith. Cover by Staton. *(Suggested for Mature Readers)* $1.00

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA #32**
Part 3 of the 4-part JLA/JLE Crossover: Continued from JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE #7. Hordes of vampires are growing all over the place while Spectre and Dr. Fate appeal to the Lords of Order to stop the man behind it all: the Gray Man. Concludes in JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE #8. Written by Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis, with art by Adam Hughes and Joe Rubinstein. Cover by Hughes. $1.00

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE #7**
Part 2 of the 4-part JLA/JLE Crossover: Continued from JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA #31. The JLE investigates the destruction of several Balkan villages and faces a bloodthirsty mob. Continues in JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA #32. Written by Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis, with art by Bart Sears and Pablo Marcos. Cover by Sears and Rubinstein. $1.00

☐ **L.E.G.I.O.N. '89 #10**
Who's in charge of the L.E.G.I.O.N.aires? The power struggle raging within the team will soon decide that. Written by Keith Giffen and Alan Grant, with art by Barry Kitson and Mark McKenna. Cover by Kevin Maguire and Al Gordon. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES: The Great Darkness Saga**
trade paperback edition
From the pages of LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #290–294 and LEGION OF SUPERHEROES ANNUAL #2 comes the complete Great Darkness Saga, reprinted in a single volume for the first time. Legionnaires battle the great and powerful Darkseid to avert a final future Apokolips. The Great Darkness Saga was written by Paul Levitz, with art by Keith Giffen, Pat Broderick, and Larry Mahlstedt. Seven pages of this Legion classic have been redrawn for this volume by Giffen and Mahlstedt, who also provide the cover. Also included is a gatefold reproduction of Giffen's long sold-out poster of the Legion. $17.95

☐ **MANHUNTER #19**
Part 2 of a 6-part story: an old friend makes the ultimate choice as Mark Shaw's life continues to crumble under the master machinations of Dumas. Written by Kim Yale, with art by Grant Miehm and Al Vey. Cover pencilled by Miehm. $1.00

☐ **MISTER MIRACLE #10**
Maxi-Man tells Mister Miracle "This Town Ain't Big Enough for Both of Us" as he fights the master escape artist for the honor of being Bailey, New Hampshire's resident super-hero. Written by Len Wein, with art and cover by Joe Phillips and Bruce Patterson. $1.00

BOOKS SHIPPING IN SEPTEMBER

☐ **THE NEW GODS #9**
Part 3 of the 6-part "Civil Warrior": Civil war rages on New Genesis as Orion joins the army of Apokolips. Written by Mark Evanier and Paris Cullins, with art by Cullins and Will Blyberg. Cover by Cullins. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **THE NEW LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #1**
It's five years later . . . after the Legion has been disbanded and the Earth is controlled by the Dominators. Can a single former Legionnaire rebuild what was once the greatest fighting force of the 30th Century? Written by Keith Giffen, Tom Bierbaum and Mary Bierbaum, with art and cover by Giffen and Al Gordon. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

☐ **THE NEW TITANS #60**
Part 2 of the 5-part "A Lonely Place of Dying": Continued from BATMAN #440. Nightwing returns to his roots at Haly's Circus . . . where death awaits under the Big Top . . . and the mystery man who's been spying on Batman turns his sights on Dick Grayson. Written by Marv Wolfman and Gerorge Pérez and pencilled by Tom Grummett. Cover by Pérez. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

☐ **THE PHANTOM #8**
The newest "sport" among teenagers is "train surfing," and The Phantom catches a ride *atop* a speeding train to find out what the kick could be. Written by Mark Verheiden, with art and cover by Luke McDonnell. *(New Format)* $1.50

THE PHANTOM #8

☐ **THE POWER OF THE ATOM #18**
The Atom finally turns the tables on the organization responsible for all of his recent problems. Last issue. Written by Roger Stern, with art by Graham Nolan and K.S. Wilson. Cover by Nolan and Brett Breeding. $1.00

☐ **THE QUESTION #31**
The mayor's blowing up the town. If Vic Sage can't find the cause of Hub City's decay . . . can the Question? Written by Dennis O'Neil, with art and cover by Denys Cowan and Malcolm Jones III. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Deluxe Format)* $1.75

THE QUESTION #31

☐ **SANDMAN #11**
More secrets of the Doll's House are revealed . . . but more mysterious is the appearance of yet *another* Sandman. Written by Neil Gaiman, with art by Mike Dringenberg and Malcolm Jones III. Painted cover by Dave McKean. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format)* $1.50

☐ **THE SHADOW STRIKES #2**
Harry Vincent is attacked by gypsies . . . Margo Lane is under the sway of a mysterious madman . . . and The Shadow is tracking a killer who stalks the politically powerful from both New York and Moscow. Written by Gerard Jones, with art and cover by Eduardo Barreto. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

☐ **SKREEMER #6**
(of a 6-issue mini-series)
Veto Skreemer's secret . . . and curse . . . revealed. The story concludes, tracing his life from its bloody beginnings to the equally bloody end of the Age of Giants. Written by Pete Milligan, with art by Brett Ewins and Steve Dillon. Cover by Ewins. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Deluxe Format)* $2.00

☐ **THE SPECTRE #30**
Corrigan's Cryptica Crimes, Ltd. has a new case involving a forgotten murder, a haunted house, and a demonic possession. Written by Doug Moench with art by Fred Butler and Gonzalo Mayo. Cover by Butler and Malcolm Jones III. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **STAR TREK® #2**
Warring nations on Chronian III don't want the Enterprise to mediate their conflict after the ambassador who called for help winds up dead. The only way Kirk can help is by violating the Federation's Prime Directive. Written by Peter David, with art by James W. Fry and Arne Starr. Cover by Jerome Moore. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **STAR TREK®: THE NEXT GENERATION® #2**
To regain the honor lost by the Federation in the wake of the Raimonan Primarch's missing will, Riker willingly enters into deadly combat with the planet's champion. Written by Jan Friedman, with art by Pablo Marcos. Cover by Jerome Moore. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **STARMAN #16**
Will Payton is reunited with his long-lost father . . . but the reunion is marred by his mother's reaction and by the shadow of death. Written by Roger Stern, with art by Tom Lyle and Scott Hanna. Cover by Lyle. $1.00

STARMAN #16

☐ **SUICIDE SQUAD #34**
It's the battle you've all been waiting for: Granny Goodness versus . . . Amanda Waller? The Apokolips-marooned Squad members are also getting their share of fighting with Darkseid's minions as Lashina's plans reach fruition. Written by John Ostrander and Kim Yale, with art by John K. Snyder and Geoff Isherwood. Cover by Karl Kesel. $1.00

SUICIDE SQUAD #34

☐ **SUPERMAN #37**
Jimmy Olsen is taken to "The Project" for experimentation on his DNA (which was altered by the Eradicator in ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #458). Can The Newsboy Legion help Superman's pal escape with his DNA intact? Written and pencilled by Jerry Ordway, with inks by Dennis Janke. Cover by Ordway. $75.

☐ **SWAMP THING #90**
As Swamp Thing makes his way back home through the time stream, his and Abby's child (the new Earth elemental) is born. Written by Doug Wheeler, with art by Pat Broderick and Alfredo Alcala. Painted cover by John Totleben. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format)* $1.50

☐ **UNKNOWN SOLDIER #11**
(of a 12-issue maxi-series)
Part of the Soldier's memory returns, revealing to him the location of the farmhouse he grew up in . . . and now tries to retire to. But Army Intelligence and the CIA have different plans for him. Written by James Owsley, with art and cover by Phil Gascoine. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.75

☐ **WONDER WOMAN #36**
Man finally comes to Paradise Island as part of the cultural exchange between Themyscira and Patriarch's world. Written by George Pérez and Mindy Newell, with art by Chris Marrinan and Steve Montano. Cover by Marrinan and Pérez. $1.00

☐ **YOUNG ALL-STARS #31**
The All-Star gang's all here . . . for the final showdown with the Sons of Dawn. This final issue of YOUNG ALL-STARS is written by Roy and Dann Thomas, with art and cover by Lou Manna and Bob Downs. *(New Format)* $1.75

people at WORK

KEITH GIFFEN

Not many comics can boast a following like that of the LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES. For over thirty years, since they made their debut in ADVENTURE COMICS, they have been more closely watched and fretted over than just about any group of hereos, so the multitude of talented folks who have scripted and drawn them have always come under the closest scrutiny. And, while Keith Giffen is by no means a newcomer to the heroes of the 30th Century, his new tenure as both plotter and penciller have a lot of people both excited and concerned about what he's got planned.

Keith assures us all that we've nothing to worry about. But before we get to Keith's plans for the future, let's take a look at his past.

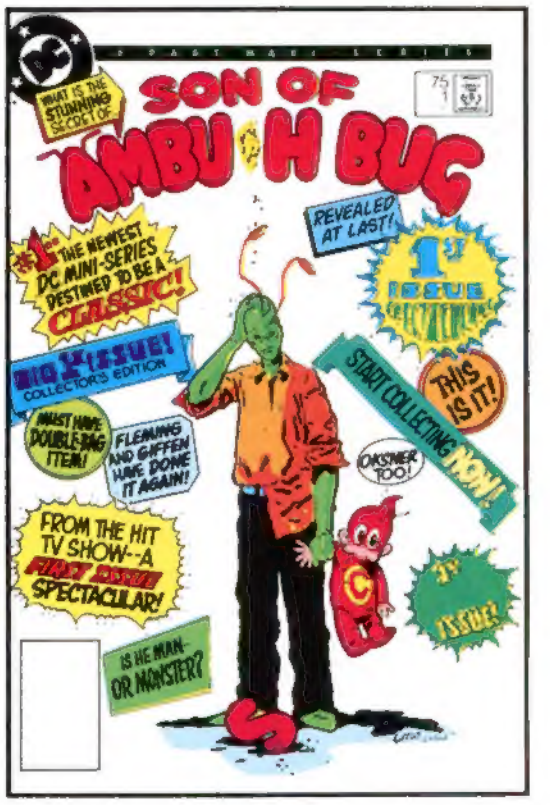
"I was born November, 1952. To the best of my recollection we're talking about, in Queens, New York. When my parents brought me home from the hospital, the first person who ever held me, other than my parents, was the guy who lived downstairs, Whitey Ford. You know, back then, baseball players weren't making the exorbitant amounts of money they make today. As they were coming in, he was just coming out. It's followed me . . . cursed me my whole life through. To this day I have an inordinate fear of baseball . . . that's why I'm not on DC's softball team.

"When I was about a year old, we moved to Clifton, New Jersey. I was basically raised in Clifton. Little Falls, West Paterson . . . that area. Since then I've kind of hopped around New Jersey. I've lived down at the shore, the rural areas, the urban areas. I've been a New Jerseyite all my life."

As is the case with people who find themselves in the comic book industry, Keith had an early, and lasting, close encounter with comics. "The first actual recollection I've got of any comic book was a WORLD'S FINEST. I do not know the issue number. But I remember the cover to this day. It was one of those with the early Batwoman, with the yellow and red uniform, which made so much sense because it was so bat-like," Keith laughs. "She had gotten Superman's powers, and there was this green monster on the cover that looked like it was wearing one of those hats, with the earmuffs that come down. And he had long tentacles with Mickey Mouse gloves on. I've looked around for it in DC's library and I cannot find it. I've looked for it at conventions. I'd give my life to get a copy of this thing.

"But I had all sorts of comics there. The WORLD'S FINEST is what sticks in my mind, but I also saw the old monster comics from soon-to-be-Marvel, just across the board kind of stuff. From Classics Illustrated to Fin Fang Foom. I was about eight years old when I decided I was going to work in comics."

Keith isn't exactly exuberant over his earliest artistic abilities. "My parents keep saying, yes, yes, he exhibited talent all along, but a kid makes a squiggle on a piece of paper


SON OF AMBUSH BUG
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1ST ISSUE
THIS IS IT!
START COLLECTING NOW!
FLEMING AND GIFFEN HAVE DONE IT AGAIN!
FROM THE HIT TV SHOW--A FIRST ISSUE SPECTACULAR!
IS HE MAN-OR MONSTER?

and . . . it's a worm! How wonderful. But I focused on the art. It was what I wanted.

"I wasn't big, like a lot of guys when they're young, on copying Thor out of the comic books and stuff. I copied toys and things out of catalogs and then, I must have been about twelve or thirteen when it dawned on me, Hey, why don't I start taking things out of the comics?

"I was lucky enough to have an art teacher who didn't consider comic books to be the ghetto everybody considered them. So even though everybody else around me, my parents, were telling me I was crazy, I should go into advertising, I'm never going to make any money, I'm going to starve, he was there as the one lone, supporting voice. But he was a great influence. He turned me on to the Hogarth books, Burne Hogarth's anatomy books. He was the one who told me these flat drawings would never do.

"From there, I just never lost sight of it. Even though after high school . . . well, in high school I worked part time for Sears, and afterwards I worked for Johnson Tobacco, which had an outlet in Sears.

"From there I worked for Hoffman-LaRoche, the pharmaceutical firm out of Nutley, New Jersey. I was a material handler, which basically meant that if it was radioactive, bio-hazardous, or chemically dangerous, they handed it to us to deliver. Mostly it was running down to the Colt's Neck Farm to pick up goat parts. They'd take the goat apart and put it in separate boxes and we'd pick it up. We just shoved them into a bin and hoped that the dry ice held up.

"Working for LaRoche was one of the real surreal moments of my life. I mean, I was responsible for the inadvertent slaughter of like over 200 baby chicks. We were on the State parkway when the back doors of the truck blew open and the two skids hit the parkway.

"Of course, those experiences strengthened my resolve to get out of there and into comics. It strengthened it so much that from Hoffman-LaRoche, I went into comics."

Keith divides his comics career into two parts, remembering, "My first time around, I put together my portfolio and said, Okay, before I go and show my portfolio, I think I'll call first. Which is not the most intelligent thing to do. I had four companies listed to try

. . . Marvel, DC, Atlas, which was still going then, and, of course, Charlton. Good old pokey Charlton. I was going to call Charlton, but I wasn't that crazy about what they were doing at the time, so I figured, let me call Atlas.

"So I called up Atlas, and I don't know who the woman was on the other end of the line, but she was very enthusiastic and wonderful and, oh come on up and show us your stuff, yes, we're looking for people, oh yeah, we're real big on new talent, and . . . oh yeah, we're going out of business tomorrow. I'd called the day before they were closing their doors.

"So I hung up and thought, okay, I'll call Charlton. But I figured why should I start from the bottom and work my way up? Let me get turned down by the biggies, like old Marvel. So I called Marvel, because back then Marvel was pretty much the leader in the field. This was around late 1975.

"I called Marvel and was told to drop my samples off. I did and went back the next day to get them and the woman started yelling at me that they couldn't get in touch with me. Because Ed Hannigan . . . I owe my comics career to Ed Hannigan . . . had just left a book called *The Sword in the Star* and they needed an artist. Instantly. John Romita and Bill Mantlo had seen my stuff and liked what they saw and I was hired. I was three-quarters of the way through the story when I got a call and they said, Well, we're not going to print it.

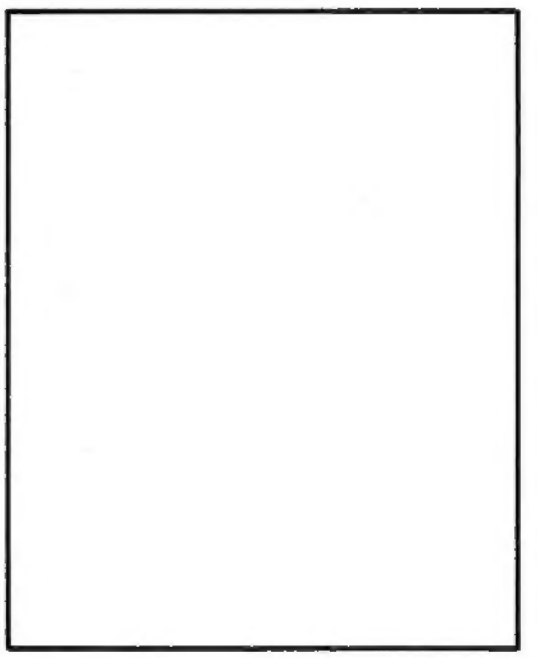
"That was followed by a whole series of fiascos until around a year later, when I left the business because I just wasn't in tune with what was going on, I guess. I had done *Claw the Unconquerable*, and *All-Star*, with Wally Wood. Not a good time for me. I was in too many fights, going against the current. That was right during the infamous DC Implosion." When the smoke of the Implosion cleared, Keith was gone.

"I went to South Jersey, to be near the ocean, and wound up selling vacuum cleaners door to door. I made good money at it. Did phone collections . . . I essentially vanished for a good three or four years from the business."

But comic books never really left Keith's consciousness or his plans for the future. "I finally got up the necessary amount of courage to try it again. I had just barely been keeping up with the comics during that time. I'd pick up little bits here and there that interested me, but all we had was one raggedy 7-Eleven . . . I think Germany got the comics before this 7-Eleven did. So there wasn't a heck of a lot to keep up on.

"I called up Joe Orlando . . . figuring he'd take the long overdue pleasure of hanging up on me from my first go round in the business. But in spite of everything he told me to come on in and show them what I was doing. I went in and was relayed through to Dave Manak, and from there I started picking up ghost stories and then the Dr. Fate back-up I did in FLASH, followed by Mike Barr putting me on the LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES. And here I am today, still in it. I'm real bad with dates. I tell people I was born in 1952 because I don't know how old I am . . . I have to count up from 1952, but that was somewhere around 1981, 1982.

"I stayed on the Legion for three years because I was determined not to repeat all of the horrible mistakes I made the first time around. I really wanted to make a go of it this time . . . basically I came back after I had grown up.



This *would* be a picture of Keith Giffen, if he allowed his photo to be taken. Since he doesn't, well, here's the space for you to draw in your own idea of what Keith looks like. Have fun!

"I stayed on it for three years, working with Paul Levitz, and those were three of the best years I've ever had in the business. Everything was cooking then. Paul hit the ground running . . . I guess that's when people started to realize that I existed. I don't know if it was due to the Legion, which seems to be a book where people can be catapulted into the limelight, for a little while. It has a hardcore following, and that was growing. I think the Great Darkness Saga (which is being reprinted this month in a trade paperback edition) might have had a lot to do with that. That was when people started saying that I was a super-star, which is a term I disagree with vehemently. And this time I was smart enough not to listen. And from there, I think people pretty much know where I've been. I did AMBUSH BUG, and HEX, little odds and ends here and there.

"As you probably well know, I'm always tossing ideas into books. Paul always gave me a co-plotter credit in the LEGION, but all I'd really do at that point is sort of go to say, 'Gee wouldn't it be weird if we did this or did that?' Paul was always generous giving me the credit and he was always telling me to try my hand at plotting something. He was a big supporter at that point. Trying to convince me I should do more than just pencil.

"Well, I'd always wanted to draw JUSTICE LEAGUE. Andy Helfer was editing it at that point, and I started a real barrage of 'Gimme Justice League, gimme Justice League!,' so when it finally came about, it was Andy and Paul who said, okay, let's give it to him. Let him put his money where his mouth is. And I wound up on the book."

And now, several years later, Keith is back on the LEGION, as both plotter and penciller. "I get a kick out of plotting. I do it a little differently than most people in that I don't type it up. I cannot type. I do not like machines. I draw it up like a little comic book, little thumbnail sketches. Mike Baron does it like that. Harvey Kurtzman . . . it dates all the way back to Harvey Kurtzman, who used to do it on his war books. It's not that I think I'm such a great storyteller that people should follow my breakdowns, it's just that this way I know that the information I want to get across will fit on that page. And it's just easier for me.

"See, I do get a kick out of it. I like what I call seat-of-the-pants plotting, which is where you just plunge on in there and see where the story goes. The two JUSTICE LEAGUE books reflect that. I like to think they have a kind of headlong momentum, that people are never sure of what's going to happen next when they pick up the book. I don't think JUSTICE LEAGUE is the kind of book that you can pick up and predict what's going to happen by the last page. I kind of like that.

"But I missed pencilling, so now I'm back on this new LEGION book, which I'm pencilling and plotting. So right now I've got the two JUSTICE LEAGUE books and a third one in the works, that I'm plotting. I'll put my hand into little things here and there, but those are actually the assignments I've got right now. I signed on for twelve issues of L.E.G.I.O.N. '89 and I finished that commitment. So although all that stuff's hitting at the same time and I seem like a real workhorse, these were staggered projects."

Keith displayed his first hint of hesitancy when asked if and when he will ever tackle the scripting end of comics. "I've really got to screw up my courage to break out into writing full scripts myself. The actual scripting does take me an inordinate amount of time. The plotting and the pencilling I can get done . . . I get into a rhythm with them. I can get it done so that the books get out on schedule and I can feed the other people down the chain so that they're not going hungry or waiting for work. Scripting . . . I think I'd be a bottleneck on the book at this point and I don't want to do it until I'm really ready. But I will eventually."

But before that happens, Keith has a lot of plans for the Legion. "The main reason for starting the New Legion 'five years later,' that is, picking up the story five years after what Paul had done in the book, was more for my benefit than anyone else's. When you're coming onto a book after a run like Paul's had, that kind of dedication to a book . . . you know, like his work, hate his work, doesn't matter. There was a feel to that book that was totally Paul's. I wanted to distance myself from that, push myself away, so that that body of work would remain. It was inviolate. It was Paul's. There it is.

"So the 'five years later' was so I could get a clean start. The readers could get a clean start. We could bring in new people and leave a sort of nod to Paul that what he did, I'm not going to mess around with. I'll take it up five years later, but your run on the LEGION is still yours. I'm not going to come in and undo everything he's done. He spent so many years building the book to a certain point and then somebody comes in and in one issue changes everything around. It's horrible for somebody and I wasn't going to do that.

"That's the primary thing, other than the fact that I have a real deep affection for the book. That's one of the reasons I'm on it. I'm not going to destroy it. No, no, no, that ain't gonna happen. I'm on the book because I want to be . . . everyone on the team is there because they want to be. I think when the first issue comes out, a lot of people who were really scared about what's going to happen are going to realize that everything they love about the Legion is still there and is only being reinforced."

Lois Lane

From the archives of the DC Comics Library, we bring you the cover of SUPERMAN'S GIRL FRIEND LOIS LANE #19 (1960), the first issue in an "imaginary story."

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